Seminar organised on pollution of Yamuna

228. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the views expressed at a seminar organised by the Delhi Medical Association recently to the effect that Yamuna is the most polluted river;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in regard thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have carried out a survey of the various rivers of the country in this regard;

(d) if so, the results of the survey; and

(e) what are the details of the pla drawn to clean up the rivers?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The river Yamuna has been identified as a grossly polluted river and a scheme for abatement of pollution in the river Yamuna is under formulation.

(c) to (e) A National River Action Plan for abatement of pollution in the polluted stretches of some major rivers identified on the basis of surveys by the Central Pollution Control Board is under formulation. Details in this regard are being worked out.

Degradation of environment and pollution

229. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale degradation of environment and pollution in the paddy fields due to unabated pouring of crude-waste and wanton flaring up of natural gas in Assam;

(b) what action has been taken by Government to prevent such nuisance in this regard;

(c) whether any directions have been issued by Government to the ONGC and Oil India in Assam; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) yes, Sir. Effluent water containing oil escaping from the flarepits to the surrounding fields has affected soil quality.

(b) to (d) Guidelines have been issued and standards have been laid down for industrial operations. The Assam Pollution Control Board has directed the industries to comply with the prescribed standards within a time-frame.

Killing of one horned Rhino at Kaziranga, Assam

230. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is regular killing of one horned Rhino at Kaziranga, in Assam by the poachers in collusion with the forest officials; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to prevent such crimes and to protect the rare species?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) Although several cases of poaching of Rhinos in Assam take place every year, there is no specific report about collusion of forest staff in such cases.

(b) Steps taken to protect the Kaziranga National Park and the rhinos include:

(i) Stringent measures against poaching, encroachment, etc., in the Park are taken under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.